



Office of Education, Evangelization and Catechesis Archdiocese of Hartford

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The Office for Education, Evangelization and Catechesis announces that the High School Seniors in the Class of 2020 at the four Archdiocesan High Schools will celebrate the conclusion of their high school journey in a unique “hybrid” fashion this year. While the current pandemic has created a situation that does not allow us the traditional forms of celebrating the gifts of our seniors, it is important for us to do our best to honor and congratulate the achievements of these young women and men in a special way. The safety and health of our students, their families and each school community remain our primary and overriding concern at this challenging time, and they simply cannot be guaranteed if live events which would include the entire graduating class were conducted.

There are four important basic components for the Graduation Celebration this year. The first two explain the revised format of our traditional celebrations. The second two indicate new 2020 plans to honor our graduating seniors.

1. Each high school will stream a virtual Baccalaureate Mass offered for the graduating seniors at the time previously scheduled for the actual Baccalaureate Mass.
2. Each high school will stream a virtual Commencement Ceremony at the time previously scheduled for the actual Commencement Ceremony. This will be pre-recorded prior and will have some common components for all four high schools as well as specific components related to the unique character of each school.
3. The administrators of each high school are planning a “drive by” opportunity on a specific date/time for each graduate to come on campus in a car with his/her family and be presented with his/her diploma and any awards an individual graduate may be receiving. Students should wear cap and gown for this occasion. The school administration will determine the specifics for each high school and all social distancing guidelines must be followed. Unfortunately, this means no physical contact to offer congratulations, affection, thanks, etc. Since each campus, faculty, administration and school culture is unique, the chief administrator of each school will make the final determination of how this will “look” in consultation with other administrators and any other individuals he/she wishes to include in the planning for this special moment.
4. Each school administration will announce three (3) hold dates/times for a larger scale celebration when the entire Class of 2020 may gather with music, food, and the time and space to share memories. The earliest date will be in mid/late August, potentially before graduates may be heading to college; the next possible date will be at Thanksgiving time; the final hold date will be during Christmas break. Since it is impossible to determine at this time when such a gathering can be safely held, it is important to hold three dates. If there is a need to wait longer, the Class of 2020 will be notified in a timely manner.

Each school will arrange with the graduates a safe and appropriate process for returning any materials that belong to the school or are due to the school prior to participation in graduation events. They will also arrange for the distribution of caps/gowns, yearbooks and the cleaning out of lockers/athletic lockers. While it is very unfortunate that we are not able to provide a venue for “in person” interaction due to the serious nature of the pandemic, every effort will be made to honor and celebrate the graduates.

